

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AMIR MACHMUD SAYS SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
SHOULD BE LEFT TO INDONESIANS

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF INTERIOR AMIR MACHMUD ADVISED REPRESENTATIVES OF INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTIES NOVEMBER 15 THAT SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN INDONESIA SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY INDONESIANS THEMSELVES SINCE ONLY THEY ARE QUALIFIED TO UNDERSTAND AND INTERPRET THE INDONESIAN PERSONALITY. HE ALSO SAID FOREIGN FUNDS ARE NOT NEEDED FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND THAT SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCHERS MUST GUARD AGAINST ENDANGERING SECURITY. AMIR'S WARNINGS, WHICH RECALL HIS XENOPHOBIC OUTBURSTS AT THE TIME OF THE SUBURI AFFAIR IN 1972, ARE PROBABLY MORE AN EXPRESSION OF HIS PERSONAL VIEWS THAN NEW GOVERNMENT POLICY. FOLLOWING BASED ON REPORTS IN KOMPAS AND SUARA KARYA, NOVEMBER 16. END SUMMARY.

1. AMIR'S REMARKS ABOUT PERILS OF FOREIGN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH WERE CONTAINED IN WRITTEN STATEMENT WELCOMING POLITICAL AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENTISTS FROM
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UNIVERSITIES THROUGHOUT INDONESIA TO A METHODOLOGY

UPGRADING COURSE IN JAKARTA. HE STATED THAT SINCE STUDY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY IN INDONESIA INVOLVES THE "IDENTITY, SPIRIT AND SOUL" OF THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR NATION IT WOULD BE "PECULAR" TO ENTRUST THIS STUDY TO OTHERS WHO ARE LESS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND VALUES THAT REPRESENT "HEART AND MIND" OF INDONESIA. NOR IS FOREIGN MONEY NECESSARY FOR SUCH RESEARCH, HE SAID.

2. AMIR ALSO NOTED THAT IN JUDGING THE METHODS AND AIMS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, THE SECURITY AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE MUST BE CONSIDERED. RESEARCHERS MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID "PROVOCATIVE" QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT IMPLANT IDEAS IN THE MINDS OF THOSE QUESTIONED, AND TO GUARD AGAINST THE SPREAD OF INFORMATION THAT COULD WEAKEN OR DISTURB SOCIETY.

3. COMMENT: SINCE JUNE 1972 WHEN AMIR MACHMUD CHARGED AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN JOHN DIGREGORIO OF P.T. SUBURI WITH "SUBVERSION" FOR CONDUCTING POLL ON POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARD SUHARTO AND OTHER NATIONAL LEADERS (EVENTUALLY LEADING TO DIGREGORIO'S FORCED DEPARTURE), THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE FUSS OVER FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH. FOREIGN SCHOLARS ARE REGULARLY PERMITTED TO CONDUCT SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PROJECTS UNDER SUPERVISION OF LIPI (NATIONAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE) AND THEY REPORTEDLY EXPERIENCE FEW DIFFICULTIES. IN ABSENCE OF NEW CAUSE CELEBRE THAT AMIR MIGHT SEIZE ON TO RE-OPEN CAMPAIGN FOR TIGHTER CONTROLS ON FOREIGN SCHOLARS, WE SUSPECT HIS COMMENTS REPORTED ABOVE ARE MERELY RHETORICAL AND DO NOT AUGUR CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY.
GALBRAITH

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